



Prevention Voices

Summer 2007

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This newsletter will be published quarterly by the MT Department of Public Health and Human Services, HIV/STD Section.

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Montanans Attend Prevention Leadership Summit

Montana was well represented at this year's HIV Prevention Leadership Summit held May 20 - 23 in New Orleans. Casey and Eddie Rudd of Connections in Bozeman, Heather Tomlins of Montana Targeted Prevention (MTAP), Lindsey Doe of Missoula AIDS Council, and Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) HIV Prevention and Treatment Program Specialist Sandy Sands attended this year's summit titled, "The Changing Landscape of HIV/AIDS: Rising to the Challenge." They coordinated attendance at sessions to maximize the scope of information to take home to Montana.

The Rudds presented their HIV Prevention Interventions, "Taking it to the System and Taking it to the Population: An HIV/HCV Prevention Intervention for IDUs." Their roundtable presentation was well-attended and well-received, according to MTAP's Tomlins. "They seemed to gain a lot of confidence in sharing their experience developing a new strategy for helping mental health and substance abuse professionals learn how to incorporate harm reduction methods into their work," says Tomlins.

The conference was packed with people and offered a variety of sessions, workshops and roundtables. "There was a great deal of diversity," says Sands. "It was much more comprehensive than past years, and included numerous rural state and Native American-focused sessions, which are of particular interest to us here in Montana." Tomlins was also impressed by the mix, noting a prevalence of sessions about HIV/HCV co-infection.

Missoula AIDS Council HIV Prevention Coordinator Lindsey Doe says the entire conference was beneficial, but if she needed to boil it down to one take-home message, this is it: "Don't use the word 'only' when talking about numbers of people affected by HIV/AIDS," says Doe. She says that numbers of cases are somebody's friend or loved one.

Sands observed good collaboration between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) prevention initiatives and Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) treatment programs.

One CDC speaker encouraged HIV prevention partnerships, including improved collaboration and joint working across government agencies. "The fight against HIV/AIDS in the U.S. will not be achieved by any single agency or individual, but will require partnerships characterized by a renewed commitment to service and a re-energizing of effort," said Kevin Fenton, MD, PhD, FFPH, Director of CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS.

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Taking It to the System and Population

As soon as Casey and Eddie Rudd returned home from presenting at the 2007 HIV Prevention Leadership Conference in New Orleans, May 20 - 23, they had a voicemail asking them to speak at the United States Conference on AIDS in Palm Springs, November 7 - 10. Their presentation “Taking it to the System and Taking it to the Population: An HIV/HCV Prevention Intervention for IDUs” was that good!

Casey says she even got a handwritten congratulations card from CDC Project Director, Tracy Luster-Welch that said she heard great things about the intervention. “It’s a reflection on the state about the good work Montana is doing,” says Casey. “There are a lot of good programs out there and if one gets recognition, it’s a direct reflection on all of us.”



“Taking it to the System” educates people working with intravenous drug users in prisons, mental health centers, treatment facilities, health departments, Planned Parenthood and other non-profit agencies, universities, homeless shelters, sheriff departments, border patrol offices and more. It was started in 1999 by Vicki Peterson, who was then at the Flathead City-County Health Department. Casey took it over about a year later to help “system” employees understand their clients, enlighten employees about stigma, and educate about the drug culture and lifestyle in Montana. One worker had an “ah-ha” moment and told Casey, “Now I understand why I can’t get through to my client.”

“Taking it to the System” was so successful that she and her husband Eddie, who teams up with Casey on the state-wide interventions, created “Taking it to the Population” to inform people receiving substance abuse treatment about risk behavior, HIV and Hepatitis C (HCV). Their business, Connections, is based in Bozeman and the interventions are funded by Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS).

Key to Casey and Eddie’s success is their compassionate manner. “People are really grateful,” says Casey. “They know we’re on their side and we’re trying to do things to help them.” The evaluations give rave reviews.

- “This is a great presentation. Their hearts are in a great place.”
- “They put it in our language so we can understand it.”
- “This is the best presentation I’ve had in treatment.”

**“People just want to fit in and be part of something. We give them ways to do that.”
—Casey Rudd**

Casey shares that she had a second chance in life and now she wants to give back to others. She’s seen people change their lives. “People feel lost or they feel nothing. They face a huge stigma,” says Casey. “People just want to fit in and be part of something. We give them ways to do that.”

For more information, contact Connections at (406) 556-1139 or caseyconnections@msn.com

Collaborative HIV Testing Days

The first, free walk-in testing day in five years went so well for Missoula's Partnership Health Center in June that they and their partners held another in July. They may schedule even more. "We got so many powerful evaluations and people came from as far as Lake County and Hamilton, an hour each way to get tested," says Director of Ancillary Services, Mary Jane Nealon.

The June 23 event drew 34 people for testing and was timed to coincide with National HIV Testing Day, four days later. It was a collaborative effort among Partnership Health Center, Gay Men's Health Task Force, Missoula AIDS Council (MAC), and Montana Targeted Prevention Program (MTAP). Tony Cox Community Fund and Loyola High School helped with funding. Rock'n Rudy's donated advertising space in *The Missoula Independent*.

"I Know Missoula," a local media campaign that breaks down stigmas and promotes knowledge of one's HIV status as a prevention measure, publicized the testing on TV, radio and newspaper. "Twenty-two came because of TV ads," says Nealon. "Anecdotally, a lot more people are asking about getting tested," she adds.

The "I Know Missoula" campaign emphasizes three points:

- Hundreds of men and women are living with HIV. Until they were tested, they didn't know.
- The number of women with HIV in Montana increases each year. Those who haven't been tested don't know.
- By the time many Montanans learn they have HIV, it's been up to a decade since they engaged in risky behavior. They didn't know until they were tested.

Nealon says that HIV remains an invisible problem across much of Montana. "The stigma associated with an HIV diagnosis here is reminiscent of the early epidemic in this country, forcing many of those who think they are infected to avoid seeking health care or even getting tested in the first place."

Of the more than one million Americans now estimated to be living with HIV, one-quarter do not realize they are infected. As a result, they do not receive medical care that could help them live longer, fuller lives. And without knowing it, they may also be transmitting HIV to others. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that the majority of sexually transmitted HIV infections are transmitted by people who are unaware of their infection. To find an HIV testing site in your area visit www.hivtest.org or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

"The stigma associated with an HIV diagnosis here is reminiscent of the early epidemic in this country, forcing many of those who think they are infected to avoid seeking health care or even getting tested in the first place."

—Mary Jane Nealon

MAC AIDS Fund

<http://www.jointogether.org/news/funding/opportunities/2007/mac-aids-fund-supports.html>

Programs that address AIDS-related poverty, models of care, treatment adherence and prevention focused on high-risk populations may apply for grants from the [MAC AIDS Fund](#), the grant-making arm of the MAC Cosmetics firm.

Out of Africa and Into Helena: The Story of AIDS



A Ugandan priest who works with AIDS orphans in Africa spoke at a community forum hosted by the DPHHS HIV/STD Section on Friday, July 20 at the Cogswell Building in Helena.

The “Lunch and Learn” forum, titled “Out of Africa and Into Helena: The Story of AIDS,” featured Ugandan Catholic priest, Father Julius Bwowe of the Ugandan Rural Community Support Foundation, and created awareness about the world’s AIDS crisis.

Father Bwowe assists people with AIDS, AIDS orphans, and widows in the gritty, urban streets of Kampala and in Uganda’s rural areas. In the African country wracked by civil war, the AIDS virus has undermined Uganda’s social structure by eliminating almost an entire generation of young adults.

He attributes the problem to ignorance and poverty. “We have a lot of street children, a lot of women begging,” he told the audience of about 35 people.

Father Bwowe took his vacation time to speak in Helena and other U.S. cities. “I’ve said ‘goodbye’ to huge numbers of friends and loved ones,” says Father Bwowe. “I’d like people in Helena to understand that they’re not as removed as they may think from this global epidemic.”

In Montana, new statistics as of June 2007 indicate that 488 Montanans have AIDS or HIV. That’s about one in 2000 people. In Uganda, with a population of 27 million, one in 13 people have HIV or AIDS, or 2.4 million people.

In recent years however, through political openness and community-based awareness programs, Uganda’s AIDS rates have been dropping, and the country is viewed as a model for other developing countries facing a similar AIDS fate. “We were one of the first African countries to admit the problem and invite the global community to help,” said Father Bwowe. “Today, people are encouraged to discuss the issues and change behavior. Education is empowerment.”

The forum was videotaped by Helena Civic Television (HCTV) to air at a later date.

To access videos of AIDS orphans in Uganda, visit: <http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=URFUSA>

For information on the Uganda Rural Community Support Foundation, visit: www.ugandaruralcommunitysupport.org

For information on the DPHHS HIV/STD prevention and treatment programs, visit

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/PHSD/STD-HIV/std-hiv-index.shtml>

**“I’ve said ‘goodbye’ to huge numbers of friends and loved ones. I’d like people in Helena to understand that they’re not as removed as they may think from this global epidemic,”
—Father Julius Bwowe**

Prevention Leadership Summit, continued

(Continued from page one)

He added that we need to refocus our traditional partners in the fight against AIDS while simultaneously bringing on board new partners. "Religious and business communities, correctional and mental health services all need to be part of a national mobilization effort against HIV with a single, shared vision," says Fenton.

He also spoke about the importance of culturally competent prevention interventions. "Prevention messages need to be culturally and contextually appropriate, we need to focus on HIV-positive and HIV-negative persons, and prevention messages and interventions need to focus on alcohol and drug use, and the upstream determinants of risk," said Fenton.

Fenton also advocates a dramatic and sustained expansion of access to voluntary testing. "HIV diagnosis is the gateway to lifesaving treatment," says Fenton. "Individuals who know their HIV status are more likely to take steps to prevent themselves from acquiring the virus or transmitting it to others," he added. He proposes making voluntary HIV testing a routine part of medical care, reducing the barriers to HIV testing, and ensuring easy access to new rapid HIV tests which, in many jurisdictions, can be done by trained persons who are not clinicians.

Since the conference was held in New Orleans, the conference committee arranged bus tours of the areas that were hardest hit by Hurricane Katrina. There are an estimated 3,000 people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) in New Orleans alone. Only two out of five hospitals are in operation since the storm. Charity Hospital used to dedicate an entire floor for HIV/AIDS patients, nearly 100 beds. Now, there are none specifically reserved for PLWHA.

"The fight against HIV/AIDS in the U.S. will not be achieved by any single agency or individual, but will require partnerships characterized by a renewed commitment to service and a re-energizing of effort."

**—Kevin Fenton, Director, CDC
National Center for HIV/AIDS**

Montana attendees returned well-informed and loaded down with suitcases full of resources, pamphlets, PowerPoint presentation notes, CD's, and more. The next time you are in Helena, stop in to the HIV/STD Section to check out the materials. The summit was sponsored by the CDC, Academy for Educational Development, National Minority AIDS Council, National Association of People with AIDS, and the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors. For more information on the summit and to view plenary session recordings online, visit www.nmac.org

International AIDS Society Conference web link

Couldn't make it to Sydney, Australia for the 4th International AIDS Society (IAS) Conference, July 22 - 25, 2007? You can view archived sessions from the 4th "IAS conference on HIV Pathogenesis, Treatment and Prevention." The link is provided by [kaisernetwork.org](http://www.kaisernetwork.org), a free service of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation at:

<http://www.kaisernetwork.org/ias2007/>

Human Papillomavirus Vaccine Recommendation

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) has issued its policy regarding use of vaccine for human papillomavirus (HPV). It reflects recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). “Because HPV vaccination is provided in multiple settings, involving many programs and payers, it was determined a common statement would be beneficial,” says Family and Community Health Bureau Chief Jo Ann Walsh Dotson, RN, MSN. Public health professionals in many bureaus and programs within DPHHS provided input.

A vaccine to prevent infection by four types of HPV (of approximately 100 types of HPV) has been approved by the FDA and is recommended by the national Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). DPHHS concurs with the ACIP’s recommended use of this vaccine:

- Routine vaccination of females aged 11-12 years. The vaccination series can be started as young as age 9 years.
- Catch-up vaccination of females aged 13-26 years.

This vaccine is available through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program for those 9-18 years of age and covered by Medicaid for those 19-26 years of age. Complete details of this recommendation can be found at http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5602a1.htm?s_cid=rr5602a1_e

CDC has also posted questions and answers for the public about HPV Vaccine Safety and Effectiveness at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hpv/hpv-vacsafe-effic.htm>

Additional information can be found on these CDC websites:

- HPV Vaccine: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/hpv/default.htm>
- HPV Infection: <http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/default.htm>

New Data for Montanans Living with HIV/AIDS

New data recently released by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) show one in 2000 Montanans is living with HIV or AIDS. According to the June 2007 Quarterly Summary of Montana’s Reported Living HIV/AIDS Cases, 488 Montanans have HIV or AIDS out of a population of 944,000—200 are adults living with HIV and 286 adults have AIDS. There are currently two children under 13 years of age who are HIV-positive. Since Montana began documenting HIV and AIDS cases in 1985, there have been 789 Montanans reported with HIV or AIDS, including six children. Montana reports about 20 new HIV or AIDS cases a year. The full report is available on the web at <http://hivdata.hhs.mt.gov>

Look for information coming soon to submit nominations for Montana’s 2007 World AIDS Day Recognition Awards. The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) and an awards committee select individuals and agencies throughout Montana whose outstanding efforts greatly enhance HIV/AIDS prevention and direct service in the state. Nominations are encouraged from the public and partners in HIV prevention and treatment. Awards presentations will take place on Friday, November 30, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. in the Rotunda of the State Capitol Building, Helena.



Save the Date

HIV Prevention Contractors Meeting

August 8 - 9, 2007, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Great Northern Hotel

Helena, MT

Sponsored by DPHHS HIV/STD Section

Contact: Sandy Sands, 444-1604, ssands@mt.gov

Statewide Planning Committee for HIV Treatment (SPC) Meeting

August 29, 2007, 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Deering Clinic

123 South 27th, Billings, MT

Sponsored by DPHHS HIV/STD Section

Contact: Judy Nielsen, 444-4744, jnielsen@mt.gov

Community Planning Group for HIV Prevention (CPG) Meeting

September 7 - 8, 2007

Best Western Grant Creek Inn

5280 Grant Creek Road, Missoula, MT

Sponsored by DPHHS HIV/STD Section

Contact: Judy Nielsen, 444-4744, jnielsen@mt.gov

2007 Montana Two-Spirit Gathering

September 7 - 9, 2007

Contact: FDH & Associates, fdh@mtgayhealth.org

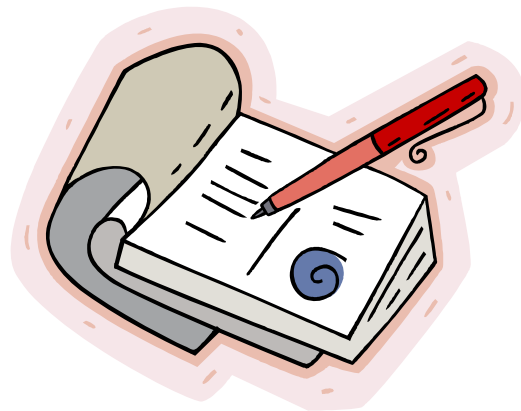
Montana Public Health Association Conference and Annual Meeting

September 11 – 13, 2007

Red Lion Colonial Hotel

Helena, MT

Contact: Lora Wier, Conference Coordinator, (406) 466-2562, health@3rivers.net



Governor's HIV/AIDS Advisory Council

September 14, 2007, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Helena, MT

DPHHS Cogswell Building, Room C-207

Sponsored by DPHHS HIV/STD Section

Contact: Judy Nielsen, 444-4744, jnielsen@mt.gov

2007 LGBTI Health Summit

October 13, 2007

Missoula, MT

Contact: David Herrera (406) 829-8075 or outinmt@aol.com

Governor's HIV/AIDS Advisory Council

November 30, 2007, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Capitol Building, Room 172

Helena, MT

Sponsored by DPHHS HIV/STD Section

Contact: Judy Nielsen, 444-4744, jnielsen@mt.gov

World AIDS Day Commemoration

November 30, 2007, 10:00 a.m. - Noon

Capitol Rotunda

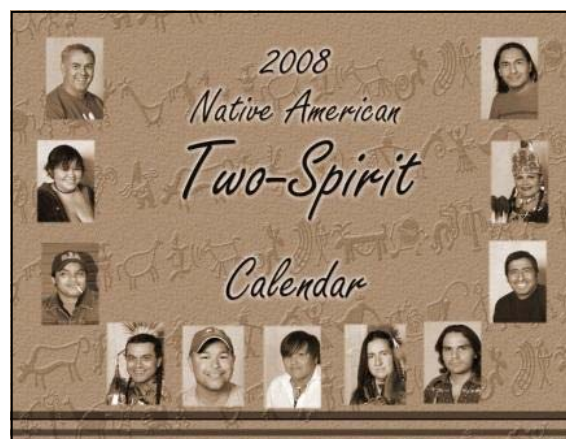
Helena, MT

Sponsored by DPHHS HIV/STD Section

Contact: Mary Ann Dunwell, 444-4117, mdunwell@mt.gov

Two-Spirit Calendar

Help support the Montana Two-Spirit Gathering! Twenty dollars gets you an amazing calendar. Hopefully, each year a new one will be made available to the public. The Montana Two-Spirit Gathering is working to raise funds to help make this year's gathering a success and to allow the maximum number of persons to attend. You can help by purchasing the 2008 Native American Two-Spirit Calendar. Thank you for your support! For a preview of the calendar click on this link: <http://www.mtgayhealth.org/retreats/2007/2007-spirit.shtml>. For more information, contact Jon Freeland at (406) 829-8075 or jon@mtgayhealth.org



National Scene

August 23 - 26, 2007

National conference by and for people living with HIV/AIDS

Cleveland, OH

Sponsored by the National Association of People With AIDS (NAPWA)

[Staying Alive 2007](#)

October 15, 2007

[National Latino AIDS Awareness Day](#).



November 2 - 6, 2007

[American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases Conference](#), Boston, MA

November 3 - 7, 2007

[American Public Health Association Conference](#), Washington, D.C.

November 7 - 10, 2007

[United States Conference on AIDS](#), Palm Springs, CA.

December 1, 2007

World AIDS Day

December 2 - 5, 2007

[2007 National HIV Prevention Conference](#), Atlanta, GA. <http://www.2007nhpc.org/backgroundinfo.asp>

December 4, 2007

[Michigan Hepatitis C Conference](#), Plymouth, MI

Who's Who

Missoula AIDS Council New Executive Director

The new Executive Director for the Missoula AIDS Council (MAC) has been on board since mid-July. Keri McWilliams, a Missoula native, brings a wealth of energy, education, expertise and fundraising know-how. Keri recently completed a Master's of Public Administration at the University of Oregon, and received a Bachelor's Degree in Health Promotion at the University of Montana.

MTAP Program Coordinator

Megan Phillips is the new Program Coordinator for the Montana Targeted Prevention Program (MTAP). She replaced Heather Tomlins who recently moved on to a new position with the Peace Corps. While we'll miss Heather, we'd like to give Megan a warm welcome. Megan has a background in social work and public administration. Megan began her new position on July 19 and can be reached at pcmtap@centric.net.

Missoula Indian Center HIV Prevention Contractor

Karen Neumiller is the new HIV Prevention Contractor at the Missoula Indian Center. Karen can be reached at (406) 829-9515 or karenn@montana.com

New HIV Case Manager in Kalispell

The Flathead City-County Health Department welcomes new HIV Case Manager, Rebecca Metteer. Rebecca will also work in prevention and can be reached at (406) 751-8157 or rmetteer@co.flathead.mt.us

Havre Community Health Center Executive Director

There will soon be a vacancy at the Hill County Health Department, as Health Officer Cindy Smith is going to be starting up a new Community Health Center in Havre as their Executive Director. Congratulations Cindy!

Farewell to Erin

HIV Surveillance Coordinator, Erin Barnes, has taken a new position as Infection Control Coordinator with St. Peter's Hospital in Helena. We're saddened to see her leave and appreciate her stellar work in surveillance. We wish her all the best in her new position.

We'd be happy to include your new staff member, award or grant received, or any information you'd like to share. We welcome articles for *HIV/STD Prevention Connection!*
Please email notices to mdunwell@mt.gov
THANK YOU!

HIV/STD Section Staff

The Department of Public Health and Human Services HIV/STD Section is grateful to be working with Montana's HIV/STD treatment and prevention community to build on the tremendous, collaborative work that's been done, and to advance HIV/STD programs and initiatives that reduce the incidence and social consequences of disease.

- **Laurie Kops** is Section Supervisor, responsible for all programs administered by the section. Laurie can be reached at lkops@mt.gov or (406) 444-2457.
 - **Judy Nielsen** is HIV Programs Coordinator. She implements HIV prevention and treatment programs. You can reach Judy at jnielsen@mt.gov or (406) 444-4744.
 - **Sandy Sands** is Program Specialist for HIV prevention and treatment. Sandy can be reached at ssands@mt.gov or (406) 444-1604.
 - **Peggy Baker** is HIV/STD Administrative Specialist. You can reach Peggy at pebaker@mt.gov or (406) 444-3565.
 - **Mary Ann Dunwell** is HIV/STD Health Educator. She can be reached at mdunwell@mt.gov or (406) 444-4117.
 - The section currently has two vacancies. They are STD Programs Coordinator and Program Specialist.
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